

Civilian Review Board Work Group Meeting #2
CRB Processes and Structure
August 20, 2020

Location: WebEx
Time: 4:00pm – 6:00pm
Attendance: 13 group members

Purpose:

To convene the Civilian Review Board Work Group for the second of six work group meetings. During this second meeting, emphasis will be placed on explaining the structure, powers, and processes of other comparative cities nationwide. This meeting also discussed decision-making processes of the CRB, other operation and commission models, and additional outcomes workgroup members want to see from these meetings.

Work Group Charge

- To make recommendations to establish an independent civilian review board to investigate officer misconduct, recommend discipline and provide for civilian oversight and accountability of the Columbus Division of Police based on national best practices and community expectations.
- The Work Group shall examine similar boards and make recommendations on, among other things, how the board will be seated and structured, and the policies, procedures and funding necessary to accomplish its mission.

Meeting Summary:

- Mo Wright, Facilitator, kicked off the meeting with re-introductions of the work group members and city staff. He also reviewed the work group charge and responsibilities again.
- Alexa Cellier, BakerHostetler, gave a robust discussion about the powers and structures of other Civilian Review Boards throughout the country. There were multiple questions and suggestions during this portion that are noted below.
- Jason Jenkins, City of Columbus, gave a brief overview of other board and commission models that are currently in use throughout Columbus. This helped to level set the group on what board models exist and necessary facets of each model.
- Mo Wright, Facilitator, led a conversation around getting group member feedback around additional topics relative to the work group and that would help increase the intended outcomes of the group.
- To close out the meeting, Matthew Smydo, City of Columbus, gave closing remarks and details about the next meeting.

Discussion surrounding the Powers of the CRB for this process are noted below:

- **Based on what you've heard what powers or key responsibilities do you believe our CRB MUST have?**
 - The group needs the authority to conduct an investigation, and subpoena witnesses and documents.
 - We need to assure that the board has racial and gender diversity.
 - The board needs the ability to review all forms of violent and non-violent cases filed to assess if the race of the victims contributed to the outcome of the case.

- Along with the board, there needs to be a large staff that can make disciplinary recommendations and enforce these recommendations.
 - There needs to be an investigative and advising committees to manage operations, procedures, and customs.
 - Public reconciliation meetings.
 - The board needs to have the ability to bypass the chain of police command and send finalized investigations to the CRB.
 - The board should have a role in reviewing the hiring process of officers.
 - Within the board, there needs to be a committee that makes recommendations and presents them to the Chief of Police.
- **Are there additional things you would want to explore for the CRB's Scope of Responsibility?**
- The protocols and process that are necessary for victims reporting directly to the CRB.
 - Creating both a Policy and Community liaison within the board.

The CRB Structure Items were broken down into three components; Appointment/Application Process, Criteria to Serve & Leadership and Size, and Staffing Structure. The discussions and questions around these components are noted below:

Appointment/Application Process

- **How does one become a member of the CRB?**
- There needs to be an election of members.
 - There should be an easy application process for civilian to have access to.
 - The board should be as large as 13 members and as small as 9 members.
- **Who makes the appointment?**
- A hybrid model would be most beneficial. Appointments would come from the Mayor and City Council, those who apply through applications, and appointments from other community organizations.
 - The citizens of Columbus should have a say on who is appointed.
 - We should use the Area Commission model and have them elected by individuals in the community.
 - There needs to be a rule instated that assures that there a certain number of ethnic and gender demographics appointed to the board.
- **How long should CRB members serve? Staggered terms?**
- The members should serve 4-year staggered terms.
 - Members should only be on the board for 2-year terms
 - The first six years should be two 3-year terms and staggered the rest of the term.

Criteria to Serve, Leadership and Size

- **What attributes and/or skills should we seek in CRB members?**
 - We need to make sure those who are applying have true and honest intents with joining the board.
 - The application process should be able to judge candidates and make sure that they have the attributes we are seeking in candidates.
 - Potential members need experience with handling situations and procedures revolving around police brutality and police misconduct.

- **Are there parameters that would exclude a person from serving on the CRB?**
 - We should not disqualify those who have felonies to be on board. But, we should not have a blanket acceptance of felonies because this could compromise the dignity and integrity of board.
 - There needs to be a youth advisory role included.
 - There does not need to be a high school or college graduation requirement to be a member.
 - We need to have seats on the board for those who have directly experienced and have been affected by police brutality.
 - We should not disqualify those who have family members that are a part of the police force.

- **How will the “leader” of the CRB be selected?**
 - To select the leader, the board should use the chair model and select the leader from within the group.
 - There should be an Executive Director hired by the City to lead the board. But, if this option is not selected there still should be a City staff member assigned to help the board.

- **What is the ideal size of the board? (should be manageable yet representative)**
 - The best sizes would be either 7,9, or 11 members.
 - The board should consist of 11 members just like City Council.

Staffing Structure

- **What key staff roles or responsibilities should be in place to support the CRB?**
 - There needs to be a very robust staff due to the possibility of a large number of complaints that could be sent in.
 - There needs to be an analysis on internal affairs investigators on the number of current complaints.
 - There should be an adequate number of investigators as determined by need within the city.

- Research and Communications committees will be necessary to look at patterns and behavior. Within these committees both the Community and Policy liaisons should be present.
- A staff role to help information security needs to be created.
- The board should have an In-house attorney on retainer.
- All staff members need to live in Columbus.
- There should be an option for a consulting role to be used when necessary.
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Facilitated conversation surrounding work group member feedback are noted below:

- **What additional things are on your mind relative to the work group and our intended outcome together?**
 - One group member raised a question about the FOP contract. The question was if the Chief of Police has the right to say that the contract will no longer represent the board.
 - The Chief of Police would not be capable of doing this.

Member's Attended:

- Jasmine Ayres
- Aslyne Rodriguez
- Erin Synk
- Janay Stevens
- Jonathan McCombs
- Nana Watson
- Densil Porteous
- Fred Benton
- Stephanie Hightower
- Ismail Mohamed
- Anthony Wilson
- Kyle Strickland
- Bo Chilton

City Staff & Guests:

- Matthew Smydo
- Kate Pishotti
- Denise Bauer
- Jason Jenkins
- Lara Baker-Moorish
- Alexa Cellier (BakerHostetler)